

FACTS ABOUT SPANKING - FreedomainRadio

Spanking – striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behavior without causing physical injury

Prevalence:

- Spanking remains one of the most common strategies to reduce undesired behavior
- **>90%** of American families report having used spanking as a means of discipline at some time
- Spanking of young children is **highly correlated** with continued spanking of school age and adolescent children
- More than **half of 13-14** year olds are still being hit an average of **8 times per year**

Widespread:

- **68%** of American parents think it's not only good but **essential** to child rearing
- **90%** of parents spank their toddlers at least **3 times a week**; **2/3** spank them **once a day**
- **1 in 4** parents begins to spank when their child is **6 months old**; **50%** when their child is **12 months old**
- **52% of 13-14** year olds gets spanked, as do **20% of high school seniors**

Age Breakdown:

- **62%** of parents hit their **1 year old**; even more hit their **4 year old**; **7%** of these 4 year olds are hit **at least once a day**
- By the **age of 7**, at least **8%** are being hit **once a day**; **33%** not less than **once a week**
- **22%** of **7 year olds** receive corporal punishment with an **implement**
- **53%** have been **threatened** with an implement: **¾ of 7 year olds** are either hit or threatened with **implements (91% of boys, 62% of girls)**
- By the age of **11**, **18% (22% boys)** are being hit **more than once a week** and **15%** of boys are punished with an **implement**

Preconditions:

- Parents are more likely to spank when they are **angry or irritable, depressed fatigued, and stressed**
- In **44%** of those surveyed, **corporal punishment** was used -**50%** of the time because the parent had **"lost it"**
- Approx. **85%** of parents expressed moderate to high **anger, remorse, and agitation** while punishing their children
 - These findings challenge the notion that parents can spank in a calm, planned manner

Effects on Parenting:

- Although **93%** of parents justify spanking, **85%** say that they would rather not if they had an **acceptable alternative**
- One study found that **54%** of mothers said that spanking was the **wrong** thing to do have done in at least **half of the times** it was used

Effects of Children:

- There is **93%** agreement in scientific studies that spanking is harmful to children
- Spanking leads to more antisocial behavior in childhood, and increased aggression, spousal abuse, and child abuse in adulthood
- That's been called "an almost unheard of consensus in parenting studies"

Defiance:

- A study shows that disciplining children by spanking puts them at risk for becoming

- aggressive, antisocial, and chronically defiant
- Dr. Elizabeth Gershoff analyzed 88 studies over 62 years to determine the effects of spanking on 11 child behaviors
- Apart from immediate compliance, the research showed that spanking had **negative** effects on other behaviors

Substance Abuse/Mental Health:

- Children that are spanked/slapped are twice as likely to develop alcohol addiction and other drug abuse problems
- A study at McMaster University found that spanking/slapping children is linked to increased rates of anxiety disorders, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, antisocial behavior, and to some extent, depression

IQ

- Spanking by parents can significantly damage a child's mental abilities and results in a lower IQ later in life, suggests a study by researchers at the University of New Hampshire
- The research team also looked at corporal punishment practices in 32 countries, and found a lower average IQ in nations in which spanking was more prevalent
- Kids who are physically punished had up to 5 point lower IQ score than kids who weren't – and the more the children were spanked, the lower their IQs

Mental Abilities:

- A study shows that corporal punishment slows the development of mental ability, particularly in younger children age 2-6
- Corporal punishment was defined for the study as hitting a child, usually on the buttocks, at least 3 times a week
- 93% of mothers hit their 2-4 year olds an average of 3.6 times a week or 187 times a year; 12.8% hit their children at least 7 times a week
- Dose-dependent: the more children were spanked, the more they fell behind in cognitive development

PTSD:

- More spanking results in a greater probability of PTSD symptoms
- A lot of CP more than doubles the % with high PTSD symptoms

Cycle of Abuse:

- Parents who experienced frequent CP as children perceived it was acceptable, and frequently spanked their own children
- Their children, in turn, advocated spanking as a disciplinary method and, and preferred aggressive conflict resolution strategies with peers and siblings

Aggression:

- Frequent use of CP (i.e. mother's use of spanking more than twice in the previous month) when the child was 3 years of age was associated with increased risk for higher levels of child aggression when the child was 5 years old
- Even controlling for baseline antisocial behavior, the more 3-6 year old children were hit, the worse their behavior was when assessed 2 years later

Physical Abuse:

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill researchers concluded that parents who report spanking children with an object and parents who frequently spank children are much more likely to report other harsh punishment acts consistent with physical abuse

Sexual Problems:

- Children whose parents spank or inflict other CP on them are more likely to have sexual

problems later in life:

- A greater chance of physically/verbally coercing a sexual partner
- Engaging in risky sexual behavior
- Engaging in masochistic sex, including sexual arousal by spanking

Social Problems:

- Even minimal amounts of spanking can lead to increased likelihood of antisocial childhood behaviors (i.e. cheating, lying, bullying)
- Children of parents who use physical punishment/yelling/shouting as punitive discipline are much more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors (i.e. fighting, bullying, meanness to others)
- Children in punitive environments at age 2-3 scored 39% higher on a scale of aggressive behavior than children in non-punitive homes
- Children 8-9 years scored 83% higher

Life Problems:

- A study shows a link between childhood aggression and poor outcomes later in life, such as delinquency, crime, poor school results and unemployment
- When, however, punitive parenting changes at age 2-3 to non-punitive parenting, children score just as low in aggressive behavior as those in a non-punitive environment

Anxiety:

- There appears to be a linear association between the frequency of slapping/spanking in childhood and a lifetime prevalence of anxiety disorders, alcohol abuse/dependence

Crime:

- CP is associated with increased levels of aggression, and is a predictor of delinquency, violence, and crime later in life and a risk factor for child abuse

“Spanking is JUST Hitting”:

- “Children who are spanked as 1 year olds are more likely to behave aggressively and perform worse on cognitive tests as toddlers than children who are spared the punishment, research from Duke University shows. Elizabeth Gershoff, associate professor in human development and family sciences, said the study adds to a growing body of research showing negative effects of spanking. 'Almost all studies point to negative effects of spanking,' Gershoff said. 'It makes kids more aggressive, more likely to be delinquent and to have mental health problems.'”
- Because children tend to mimic parental behaviors, it's possible spanking “creates a model for using aggression,” Gershoff said. “Spanking is just hitting.”
- Less is known why spanking could inhibit cognitive development. One possibility is that parents who spank are less likely to use reasoning with their children, something that's good for development, Gershoff said

Parents Matter:

- Surveys of 23,000 parents and children finds that parenting styles had a bigger impact on their behavior than any other factor
- Children who did not have positive interactions with parents were twice as likely to have persistent behavioral problems as those who had positive interactions
- Almost 27% of children surveyed had a clinically defined behavior or learning problem

Strategy?:

- Parents who spank are more likely to use other forms of CP and a greater variety of verbal and other punitive methods

- When punishment fails, parents who rely on it tend to increase the intensity of it's use rather than to change strategies

Silence:

- A survey indicated that ~59% of pediatricians support the use of CP, at least in certain situations
- Analysis of child development textbooks published from 1980 to 2005 showed an average of only half a page on CP, and NONE that recommended parents should never spank

Avoidance:

- Why is so little space devoted to CP, which is experienced by over 90% of preschool children, and at least a third of infants, when there is overwhelming evidence of it's harmful side effects?

Evidence:

- All 20 recent studies associated CP with an increased probability of mental health problems
- 12-13 recent studies found CP associated with a higher probability of delinquent and antisocial behavior
- 4/5 studies found a relation between childhood CP and later adult criminal behavior

SUMMARY:

- **Spanking leads to:**
 - Increased child aggression
 - Increased delinquent/antisocial behavior
 - Decreased quality of child/parent relationships
 - Decreased child mental health
 - Increased physical abuse
 - Increased adult aggression
 - Increased adult criminal behavior
 - Decreased adult mental health
 - Increased risk of abusing own spouse or child

Excuses:

- "I was spanked, and I turned out fine."
- Smoking kills only 1/3 of long term smokers
- "Spanking is necessary for good behavior"
- Children not spanked were, on average, the best behaved and had the lowest rates of psychological problems
- This has been called "the best kept secret of American child psychology."
- "You can't reason with a 5 year old."

